



**Accountable  
Now**

Amnesty International  
2017 Update to Accountable Now

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**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



**Global Strategy and Impact Programme**

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## 1. Strategic Commitment to Accountability

The Independent Review Panel recommended that AI provides: *“a strong statement, signed by the CEO of Amnesty, clarifying the **specific understanding of accountability at Amnesty and how this shapes strategic decisions** is important as a preface that guides Amnesty’s report and overall approach to accountability”*.

### Statement by Salil Shetty, Secretary General of Amnesty International

As a founding member of Accountable Now, Amnesty International welcomes the opportunity to use this “improvement update” to highlight the importance of the [global movement for dynamic accountability, which Accountable Now has spearheaded with the adoption of the new 12 commitments](#). There are many synergies between the recently adopted [Global Standard](#) and our internal reflection on what does accountability mean for Amnesty – especially vis a vis our own organisational practice and operating model - now fully redistributed in nine new regional offices. The new standards are also in line with our vision for an increasingly open, agile and adaptive human rights movement that works for results alongside its allies and partners.

Two years into the implementation of our Global Strategy, [Taking Injustice Personally: Strategic Goals 2016 - 2019](#), and four years since the Global Transition Programme started its work in 2013, we now have established integrated regional offices operating in Hong Kong, Nairobi, Johannesburg, Dakar, Mexico City, Washington DC, Lima, Beirut, Tunis, East Jerusalem, Brussels, London, Moscow, Colombo and Bangkok. This means around 300 International Secretariat (IS) staff now posted on the ground – a massive shift from almost all our 600 IS staff being in London. We have greater diversity amongst our staff, reflecting our wide regional presence; have introduced new IT, finance and internal communications systems, as well as support mechanisms and process in areas ranging from security, media and research to staff relocation/ mobility. We also restructured and made changes to the majority of the remaining London-based teams to reflect our new operating model - including within campaigns, communications, the language resource centre, international advocacy, thematic research, IT, finance, movement support and governance.

All these changes showcase our deep belief that **change starts from within**. In order to become a more responsive and responsible ally to the wide myriad of civil society actors, who, like us, are determined to challenge and win the battle for more human rights for all, we had committed to learn from our transition and adapt our internal ways of working. With the Global Transition Programme coming to an end, we have now devised a new phase (Fuerza), aimed at ensuring that the International Secretariat’s new distributed model is fully integrated and aligned to the Amnesty movement, supports our sections and national entities, and is both relevant, operating efficiently and meeting our aspiration to be a truly effective global movement.

Two years into the strategy, 2017 saw many challenges to human rights deepen and new ones emerge. It was a period of “us against them”, of populist leaders reacting to – and driving xenophobia and restrictions to the rights of migrants and refugees. New or deepening threats to the expression of and ability to claim rights loomed, often in the name of national security and counter-terrorism agendas. Meanwhile cycles of violence in multiple countries have become further entrenched, and new ones emerged. The world watched as international mechanisms such as the UN Security Council failed to take action, and several African states pushed-back

against the International Criminal Court threatening the future justice and accountability. Demonizing narratives of the “other” have become increasingly overt, widespread, and popular. Partly linked to this, individuals who have, either through their words or actions, undermined the paradigm of human rights, were elected leaders or have grown more powerful in countries like the US, Hungary, India, Turkey, the Philippines and elsewhere. We have seen the inequality and neglect underlying popular anger and frustration arose at least in part from the failure of states to fulfil people’s economic, social and cultural rights. Deep and pervasive inequalities – in power, in wealth, in access and in freedom – remain a global reality and especially those most vulnerable continue to be marginalised and face discrimination. This renewed politics of demonization led to a particularly difficult context for our work across regions in the past two years, affecting our ability to influence targets and to engage effectively and convincingly, with the general public. The ultimate consequences of a long-term campaign of demonization have been horrifically clear in the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya population in Myanmar in which began in August 2017.

In other words, human rights are under attack, even in countries considered to be their traditional heartlands. This means we cannot make assumptions about the inherent strength of our case. We need to be able to show WHY human rights matter and HOW people benefit through them. Crucially, wherever we operate, it is our responsibility to ensure that the high standards which we demand of others are also respected in our own organisations. It is our ethical commitment, as a global organisation, to ‘walk the talk’ and as a result strengthen our legitimacy and strength, especially in the current climate, where the work of civil society and human rights defenders is often challenged or undermined.

Amnesty International’s assessment and understanding of impact, our renewed commitment to learning and adaptation in constant dialogue with our civil society partners and allies, as well as our communication strategies must rise to these challenges. Amnesty is striving to enhance its accountability, to use its resources in the most strategic ways. This, we believe, will strengthen the wider human rights movement but also ensure that we are making the right choices to change people’s lives so they are able to claim and enjoy their human rights.



**Salil Shetty**

**2. Improvement Analysis**

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**Mechanisms for feedback and complaints (NGO2)**

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**Comments by the Charter**

Amnesty is commended for providing this overview about filed and resolved complaints and the summary of nature of complaints received. However, the Panel would welcome information on the geographic distribution and nature of unresolved complaints in addition to the quality assurance and timeliness of resolved complaints. Also, the Panel would like a more detailed breakdown of the complaints received by Members/supporters/volunteers as the percentage of resolved complaints seems the lowest since 2011 (63%). Is the apparent low level of complaint resolution in 2015 (compared with previous years) due to some 2015 complaints are still under consideration? The Panel considers this as a weakness area; urges Amnesty to dedicate a complaints page on the redesigned website that links to the Complaints Policy and would like

to understand the reason why the complaints page was removed from the website. Having a well-known and functioning complaints mechanism is paramount to ensure accountability – and the only minimum standard for Accountable Now membership.

Our centrally held records (aggregating data from the Standard Action Report – SAR – Mechanism) indicate that the main reason why we registered a lower percentage of resolved complaints in 2015 was linked to reporting inconsistencies and information gaps. We outline below some of the issues identified as well as the solutions being put in place:

- The SAR mechanism up until now has sought to focus on formal complaints, but reporting at entity level has not always followed this criteria, which shows the need to evolve the reporting format to include more clearly into the template a space to record feedback that does not lead to formal complaints. This should enable a clearer distinction of the two at the global level moving forward. These changes are being implemented for the current reporting cycle (covering the calendar year of 2017).
- While entities do respond to the different types of feedback received from our different constituencies, in some cases they do not record the resolution ‘pathway’ systematically. This limits the extent to which resolutions can be followed up, as opposed to formal written complaints which would have more thorough process. This challenge is faced usually when dealing with negative comments on social media channels (including trolls). This is dealt with in line with moderation guidelines and social media policies, but no records of this are held centrally.

Bearing all this in mind, according to our current records for 2016, 70 out of the 2,617 comments/complaints registered globally by Amnesty International appear as either unresolved or with no clear information on their status. These were reported as comments and/or complaints either by members, supporters, volunteers or by the general public in entities within Europe, Middle East and North Africa, West Africa, North America and South America.

Across the total number of complaints received, the top reasons reported included disagreement on Amnesty tactics or positions, disagreement about Amnesty’s approach to messaging, about Amnesty’s chosen campaign themes, or about Amnesty’s statements or positions on certain issues being deemed controversial to some sections of society (e.g. positions on sex work, abortion or negative responses around the “I Welcome” campaign on refugees).

When complaints are more formally raised with Amnesty (for example when linked to fundraising procedures or individual giving) those complaints tend to be reported because of dissatisfaction with changes in procedures to collect donations, or in terms of the methods of recruitment of new members (such as door-to-door). In all cases the complaint is investigated and resolved and feedback is given both to the complainants and to the relevant AI teams.

We are strengthening this area by:

- Including in the updated Feedback Mechanism Policy and Guidelines document at the global level a clearer distinction between what is a complaint and what constitutes general feedback / comments. The updated document also clarifies what is the expectation in terms of minimum standards of reporting of feedback and complaints, and this message is being emphasised to staff both in the guidelines and resources provided to all entities. As of 20<sup>th</sup> December 2017, the updated policy and guidelines are being finalised and will be publically available in early 2018.

- We fully appreciate that improving our feedback mechanisms is only partially solved by clearer policies and guidelines, and understand that this also needs to be accompanied by dedicated messaging and practical support at both IS and entity level. To that end, we have developed a detailed log so we can progressively engage directly with those entities that have shown to be less strong in this area. As part of this initiative we purposefully share across best practice examples from those entities who are stronger, and in that way promote a two way process of learning and accountability.

In terms of the complaints page on [amnesty.org](https://www.amnesty.org/en/about-us/feedback), this has now been re-instated <https://www.amnesty.org/en/about-us/feedback>. Its removal with the transition to the new website was linked to staff transitions during the website redevelopment, as well as staff changes in the Office of the Secretary General (OSG) that led to lack of clarity in terms of the roles and responsibilities associated with the website's maintenance. In 2017, some important steps have been taken to elevate this issue area with more consistency across Amnesty International. A concrete example of that is the renewed mandate of the Global Strategy and Impact Programme - GSIP (former Strategy and Evaluation Unit), which has now an expanded remit to devote time and resources in the two interlinked functions of Project management standards and performance (PMO), on the one hand, and the Impact and Learning (I&L) function on the other.

- Within that context, the GSIP is working closely at the IS level with the Office of the Secretary General, the Digital Operations team and the Movement Support Programme to ensure all entities and teams have the appropriate support to improve the way national entities report their work centrally – which will include improving feedback mechanisms, but also how to improve organisational learning and responsiveness to our key external constituencies at all stages of our planning, monitoring and learning cycles. To that end, more comprehensive capacity building initiatives following this approach are currently being planned for 2018.
- In terms of direct roles of responsibilities and lines of accountability in the area of Mechanisms for feedback and complaints, it has internally been clarified that the ownership of the global function for management and oversight of feedback and complaints from external constituencies lies in the Office of the Secretary General Directorate (OSG) at the International Secretariat, with data management support from the Project Management Office in the Global Strategy and Impact Programme, and digital engagement and communications support from the Digital Operations team in the Communications Directorate.
- Through our analysis into our Impact achieved globally in 2016, we identified a number of examples where Amnesty demonstrated it is not afraid to innovate and use new tools and technologies to engage with our external constituencies and audiences in agile ways (for example the [Massive Open Online Courses \(MOOCs\) = under our HRE work](#), and the [Alt-Click project - Decode Darfur](#)). Moving forward we will be increasingly leveraging technology as a tool to foster more adaptive and dynamic working practices under this particular issue area. We will do this by working closely with the Communications Directorate and specifically with the Digital engagement team and OSG to ensure meaningful collaboration across teams translates in a better understanding of the needs and concerns of our stakeholders and audiences. We will promote this through our re-shaped “SPARK” programme for organisational learning and adaptation in 2018.

## Gender and diversity (NGO4)

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### Comments by the Charter:

The Panel recognises Amnesty's self-awareness about the need for more progress in this area and commends their reflection and identification of steps to improve gender and diversity approaches throughout their programs. Amnesty also notes a need to better integrate gender and diversity practices in their organisational culture, and reports a slight reduction from 26% in 2013 to 24% in 2015 of national entities without measures or plans in place. However, beyond establishing a Working Group and submitting to standards awards, Amnesty has not identified the internal steps to address the issue. The Panel considers this as a weakness area and urges Amnesty to review and identify steps to strengthen their approaches and to hopefully identify steps or targets to be able to report against in future reports. The Panel looks forward to more updates on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Working Group and to the results of the assessment by the National Equality Standards Award.

We acknowledge that there is room for improvement in this area for Amnesty International, and that benchmarking and target setting at different levels is the correct direction we should follow. Senior Leadership is well aware of this, as evidenced in our internal strategic gaps analysis (an internal piece of analysis used to support Management decision-making ahead of the approval of Amnesty's portfolio of international work for 2018-2019). That said, a number of concrete steps have already been taken in that direction, both at the level of organisational practices and programmatic standards.

### Organisational practices:

- In 2016, Amnesty attained accreditation by the National Equality Standard (NES). This means an action plan is being developed in relation to the following principles (as provided by the assessment framework of the NES):
  - Culture of inclusion
  - Understanding your business
  - Leadership that inspires
  - Talent attraction, management and retention
  - Understanding your people
  - Review and measurement
  - External recognition
  
- We have an internal engagement strategy that focuses on strengthening our leadership style, and general behaviour of people employed in the International Secretariat. The principles and ambition of our engagement strategy are the following:
  - Our leadership is transparent and honest
  - Our leadership is visible, approachable and engaged with Amnesty colleagues at all levels
  - Our leadership presents a clear strategy that is well communicated and understood
  - Our Senior Leadership Team (SLT) works together as an effective team
  - Our management works together as an effective team

- Our leadership team champion an inclusive, diverse and engaged culture in our staff cohort and recruitments
  - Our leadership recognises effort and gives positive feedback
  - We are clear about our behaviours and know what is expected of us as an Amnesty employee through how we work
  - We recognise our role as advocates for Amnesty externally
  - Our people strive for ongoing professional development and make the most of the opportunities available
  - Our management have a role ensuring that our learning and development needs are identified and supported
  - We have a zero tolerance attitude to bullying in Amnesty
  - We recognise the demands placed on our people through our work
- A new behaviour framework has been introduced across the International Secretariat's offices. The framework addresses five behaviours; considerate, respectful, accountable, creative and decisive and will be weaved into selection, performance management and expected behaviours in the work place. Under the roll out of these new behaviour framework, in December 2017 Amnesty's Senior Leadership Team have signed on to a charter focused on Dignity and Respect that outlines a commitment "to maintaining a working environment that provides respect and dignity within the workplace and in other settings where we are in the presence of our colleagues. We maintain our zero tolerance approach to all forms of disrespectful, bullying or harassment behaviour. "
  - A longer term EDI plan is being developed to be in place early 2018, which will focus on all the protected characteristics.
  - In December 2017, an internal survey was carried out to map out reported incidents of sexual harassment, subsequent actions taken, and processes in place to address these. As of 20th December 2017, results were collated and released to all Amnesty's offices – with a total of 56 out of 68 sections/ National Offices/ the International Secretariat taking part (82%), covering c95% of all our staff globally. Results show that in the past three years:
    - 47 complaints (from 19 entities) being raised alleging sexual harassment related to 30 staff members, 13 volunteers and 3 Board members
    - 22 of which led to disciplinary action
    - 12 of which led to an individual being dismissed

As a result of this initiative we have been made aware of the different levels of readiness to deal with these issues from Amnesty entities. Some have annual compliance training, others are developing or updating their policies. In early 2018 we will compile a number of resources for sections to draw upon and use to enhance your own work in this area.

- We have set up three open spaces under the banner *#MeToo – What does this hashtag mean for you?* These internal events have been advertised internally to all staff and will be hosted by an external facilitator together with members of SLT with the aim to start an open conversation, assess how best to take forward any issues and with whom. The first session was held in December and subsequent ones are booked for January. The events are hosted in London but accessible to all regional offices via video conference.
- Unconscious bias training has been rolled out to all by the People and Services Directorate with a view to increasing the awareness of managers of their own personal biases when recruiting and developing their teams and other stakeholders. SLT are also

looking to introduce mandatory training for all new starters to ensure they are clear about our stance on Dignity and Respect.

- Groups who provide a voice for people who may feel vulnerable or require different support such as transgender, sexual orientation, sex, race or religion have been increasingly active at the International Secretariat, especially in 2017. These are staff-led, self-run such as the Prisma network, which was set up initially by a group of volunteers from the campaigns and communications teams to support a more inclusive workplace culture and aiming at improving the way we communicate with each other. This group has worked hand in hand with the Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (GEDI), led by the Shop Stewards Committee, and have acted on occasions as facilitators and advocates of staff members wanting to highlight issues connected to the concerns and specific needs of the LGBTQI staff base. Groups have convened support from a wide range of staff members, including from management, which has translated for example in small financial contributions across different teams and functions to organize awareness raising and learning events on different themes.
- We are implementing a new HR Information System that will improve the accessibility to data in relation to the diversity of our employees which will support us in identifying areas and issues that need attention as well as identifying organizational trends.

**Programmatic quality standards:**

- A residential meeting involving all International Secretariat management in January 2017 identified improving our performance on gender and diversity as a key priority for 2017. The Action Plan produced by that meeting committed us to take decisions that would empower the organization to better address gender, diversity, and intersectionality as part of our global strategy and within current and future projects.
- Following on from this, the SLT instructed managers and staff to prioritize gender and diversity in their operational project planning for 2018-2019. Guidance materials were developed to support staff to better understand why this prioritization is essential and how to better integrate gender and diversity into their project development. So far the first round of project development has not met the expected targets but projects are still in development for 2018 and SLT will reassess progress at the end of the first quarter of 2018.
- To support in the planning for 2018, Senior Leadership has recruited a full time gender mainstreaming post that has started in December 2017. This post will work with management and staff to identify and develop strategies and activities that improve gender and diversity integration at Amnesty – both in the current planning cycle and in the longer term.
- In August 2017 Amnesty’s highest decision making body- the International Council, unanimously approved a resolution outlining a series of practical but ambitious steps the wider Amnesty movement will take and a basic architecture for accountability to improve our performance on gender and diversity integration between 2017-2024.

**Global Talent Management**

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<b>Comments by the Independent Review Panel:</b>
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In 2015, 54% of staff across national entities and 93% at the International Secretariat received performance reviews (compared to 53% and 89% in 2013 respectively). The Panel would like to understand the reasons behind the disparity between the International Secretariat and the national offices and continues to consider this as a weakness area. Nevertheless, the Panel welcomes the appointment of a Learning and Development Manager in 2016 and looks forward to progress in this regard.

The disparity between the completion rates of appraisals is likely to be in part due to the variety in size and scope of country sections, and also between Sections and the IS. Many of our Sections are small (less than 20 staff) and often do not have a centralised HR function to oversee processes such as performance management, unlike the IS. A number of key initiatives have been launched over the last 2 years aimed at improving management development capability at both National Entity and IS level:

### **National Entities**

- Amnesty Leadership - launched in 2016, an online platform to support Section Directors throughout their career at Amnesty from induction, managing performance to leadership development. Key resources on performance management and appraisal, as well as giving and receiving feedback is available to support directors in their role.
- Leadership Development Programme - launched in 2016, a joint programme with People & Organizational Development for Section Directors and IS Managers. Focus on building skills in transformational leadership and includes material on managing/leading teams. Each delegate has access to 5 executive coaching sessions to further help embed learning in their role.
- New Directors Workshop - due to be launched in 2018 this induction event for new Section Directors will include a 'Human Resources Basics' session, covering the core people management responsibilities of a Section Director, including performance management.

### **International Secretariat**

- As a result of a staff engagement survey that was ran in 2016, an Internal Engagement Strategy was developed with four goals. One of these goals relate to ensuring “our people make the most of their capabilities and skills and those of others”. A plan has been put together that is regularly monitored, and it includes the implementation of learning & development strategy and ensuring development opportunities is promoted into one single coherent package.
- Leadership Development Programme - launched in 2016 and aimed at Deputy Programme Directors at the IS. Focus on building skills in transformational leadership and includes managing/leading teams. Each delegate has access to 5 executive coaching sessions to further help embed learning in their role.
- Coaching - since 2016, 10 colleagues have undertaken training in Executive and Organizational Coaching and now act as internal coaches for colleagues at the IS.
- Implementation of new HR online platform (Oracle) which will allow all appraisals to be recorded and tracked online - due to launch in early 2018. The new system will also ensuring better reporting on appraisal completion rates and identification of learning needs, including ongoing self-assessment of learning priorities across different programmes. This will make it a more agile, real-time live tool to drive improvement in terms of learning and development objectives of our staff base.

### **Mechanisms to raise grievances (NGO9)**

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### **Comments by the Independent Review Panel:**

Amnesty has substantial mechanisms for formal and informal grievance including via the whistle-blowing policies and ample opportunities during directorate meetings, staff council and all staff meetings. From across the movement, there are examples of staff associations working with management, direct channels of feedback to the board, escalation in progressive levels from line manager to senior management and the board, annual appraisals, and satisfaction surveys. Grievance cases are monitored and are discussed annually by the Senior Leadership Team. Unfortunately though, there is no evidence provided that concerns raised were resolved satisfactorily and the Panel considers this a weakness area.

While we do not have a centralized/unified approach to tracking all kinds of grievances that could happen at Amnesty International at different levels, we do have a number of arenas where staff feedback is sought. This includes a set of existing policies that provide a formal approach on how to raise a grievance, a whistleblowing matter or an issue in relation to bullying and harassment. Other channels include regular team, directorate, all staff and management meetings.

Additionally, bi yearly formal performance appraisals between staff and their immediate line managers provide a constructive arena where people can raise any concerns regarding their employment in Amnesty. We also have regular meetings between SLT, human resources and the Union (JNCCs) which is now being expanded to a more informal monthly meeting. These meetings are the space in which Amnesty International grievance policy is monitored in order to identify whether it is having an adverse impact on any particular group of individuals. As a result of these meetings, actions are taken accordingly.

In terms of evidence on resolution rates of internal grievances, we do keep a record at all those instances mentioned above. For example, in 2017 we received 9 grievances raised under the grievance policy. 4 of these were alleged. Amongst other things, there have also been three cases which have been upheld and appropriate actions have been taken in respect of the behaviour and conduct of employees to their teams or individuals. We have had 1 case raised under the bullying and harassment policy during 2017 which was resolved.

Moving into 2018, we will be reviewing our grievance policy to make sure that it continues to be appropriate in IS. We will also be introducing a peer to peer support framework following training on TRIM (Trauma Risk Management) and STRAW (Sustaining Resilience at Work) that took place at the end of November 2017 for 8 people in London and across two regional offices. This programme is then intended to be rolled out across the whole of Amnesty and will provide a support network for people who may have suffered some trauma either due to the nature of their work, or this could also be used for internal complaints or grievance support.